DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 247 174 SO 015 793

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TITLE Process Analysis and the Future of Moral Education.
PUB DATE Apr 84
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (68th, New Orleans, LA, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cognitive Development; Critical Thinking; Developmental Psychology; Developmental Stages; *Discussion (Teaching Technique); Elementary Secondary Education; Emotional Development; *Ethical Instruction; Higher Education; *Moral Development; *Process Education; Social Development; Social Studies

ABSTRACT

This argument for process analysis in moral education focuses primarily on social developmental processes and educational processes that influence the development of moral reasoning structures. The descriptive-developmental approach, the developmental-ethical approach, and the developmental-process approach to moral discourse are briefly described. Based on a ten-year investigation of the nature of moral discussion-based interventions, the author reports that "transactive" forms of discussion lead to higher levels of moral understanding by expanding upon, critiquing, or integrating the reasoning of a co-discussant, thus increasing the likelihood of developing more adequate forms of reasoning. Because only about 15 percent of such discourse takes the form of the most developmentally productive type of transactive discussion, the author proposes that moral and social education in the future look to monitoring and training in social interaction skills in order to maximize the developmental benefits of such programs. Four other future concerns for moral education are presented: (1) theoretical and empirical knowledge of the relationship between moral reasoning and moral behavior must be integrated into moral education practice, (2) the role of affect in moral functioning must be addressed, (3) moral education must be defined more broadly than classroom-based phenomena, and (4) value-based moral education must be integrated with structural "value-free" approaches. (LH)

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PROCESS ANALYSIS AND THE FUTURE OF MORAL EDUCATION

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April 23, 1984.

Process Analysis and the Future of Moral Education

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Moral education, as is true as well for many educational models, has tended to focus on outcomes. Developmental education, of which moral education is one example, has been explicitly defined as an outcome-oriented discipline by Kohlberg and Mayer (1972). Indeed the title of their often cited paper is "Development as the aim of education". Restated for moral education that would read "Moral development as the aim of moral education". Certainly one would be hard-pressed to argue convincingly against the merits of such an outcome as the goal of moral education. Why indeed engage in moral education if not to produce individuals who, by some measure, can be described as having become more moral as a product of the educational curriculum? The goal of my argument today is not to refute such a claim. Rather, I hope to supplement it. I will argue that there is another focus, a complimentary focus, in moral education that has been sorely neglected, i.e., the process of developmental moral education. Furthermore, I will argue that this historical neglect is currently being corrected and will continue to be so.

Before I present my argument for process analysis in moral education, I think it would be useful to expand upon what I mean by process and identify that particular aspect of process that I intend to focus on in this paper. Process in education

and development can be examined on two levels. At the more molar level, we can simply define it as the means of growth and learning, i.e., the "how" of education in contrast to the ends or "what" of education. This is an overly general definition however. At the more molecular level, we can distinguish between various specific processes in moral education. We can point to the didactic process of the classroom teacher. We can highlight the bureaucratic process of the organizational structure of the school system. And we can address the social process that more directly produces psychological development. Teaching processes have been amply described in the education literature (e.g., Hersh, Paolitto & Reimer, 1979). Clark Power has just addressed the organizational process of moral education. Therefore, acknowledging the general notion of process as the means of moral education, I will focus on the third type of specific moral educational process, namely social developmental process.

All four of the speakers presenting papers in this symposium approach moral education from the perspective of cognitive-structural psychology. While some of us differ in the degree to which we accept orthodox versions of the Piagetian and Kohlbergian approaches to moral education, we nonetheless tend to view moral education as focused on the structures of understanding of moral and/or conventional value systems and conflicts. Not surprisingly then, my focus on social developmental processes in moral education will stem from this perspective. Perspectives derived from other approaches to moral education

might not share my conclusions about developmental process. For example, a character indoctrinative approach such as is used in Soviet education would emphasize socialization and learning variables more than cognitive-developmental variables. Or more laissez-faire approaches to moral education such as some of the "free" schools would look to issues of liberty and minimized conflict rather than optimal levels of social and cognitive conflict.

My orientation instead is toward the educational processes that impact upon the development of moral reasoning structures in students. I specifically am interested in those educational processes that promote the development of Kohlberg's (1981) stages of moral reasoning. I do not, however, believe that what I have to say here is limited to Kohlberg's theory. Indeed it is not limited even to moral stages, nor social-conventional stages, about which our next two speakers will amplify. Rather, these processes are implicated in all social cognitive structures of reasoning and perhaps non-social cognitive structures as well. We have recently investigated the relationship of some of these processes to stages of Piagetian logical thinking (Gibbs, Schnell, Berkowitz & Goldstein, 1983) and are currently looking for parallels between the processes in the development of moral and religious understanding. Nevertheless, in all of these cases, the underlying theoretical assumptions are those derived from the cognitive-structural theory of Jean Piaget (1970), especially his notion of the equilibration process. We do not have time today unfortunately to expand upon these premises here.

Let us turn instead to an example of how process analysis has been neglected in stage-based moral education. At the heart of all such moral education is some form of peer moral discussion. I should mention at this juncture that there are currently three different developmental approaches to the study of moral discourse (Berkowitz, 1984). First, there is the descriptive-developmental approach which is concerned with the development of moral discourse per se, and which attempts to describe the various stages of the development of such discourse (e.g., Miller, 1981). The second approach is the developmental-ethical approach which focuses on the inherent moral aspects of human verbal interaction (Habermas, 1975; McCarthy, 1978). This approach tends to focus on the ideal form of moral discourse and to justify it from the standpoint of normative ethics. The third approach is the one I will elaborate upon today. This developmental process approach (Berkowitz & Gibbs, 1983) represents an attempt to discover how moral discourse leads to individual moral reasoning development.

Such moral discourse is almost always an ingredient in successful moral education programs. It may take the more obvious form of classroom moral dilemma discussion (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975; Colby, Kohlberg, Fenton, Speicher-Dubin & Lieberman, 1977), or the leass obvious forms of peer counseling (Dowell, 1971; Sprinthall, 1976; Sullivan, 1980), community meetings (Power, 1981), school judicial boards (Power, in press) or role-playing (Arbuthnot, 1975). The content of such discussions varies from standard hypothetical dilemmas

to course content-related ethical problems to current events and even to real personal moral issues, but in all cases the process is at least in part based in peer discussion of ethical issues.

Based upon this analysis, it is rather startling that we have seen so little consideration of the nature of such discussion in the literature. Very little direct empirical attention has been paid to answering how such discussion produces development, even given that an impressive body of literature suggests that it consistently and effectively does so. Recently such investigations have begun to appear in the literature. Let me now briefly describe some of these approaches to understanding the moral discourse process of moral education, as well as similar studies of parallel developmental phenomena.

As I have argued elsewhere (Berkowitz, 1981; Berkowitz, in press), the moral education literature has emphasized the practice of peer discussion in producing moral developmental gains in students, but has misunderstood the nature of the process. Both teacher facillitation behaviors and student stage levels have been the predominant foci in such curricula and teacher training models. Interpreting some educational and psychological research inappropriately and integrating it with certain untested theoretical assumptions, moral educators have felt confident in their often inaccurate

understanding of how moral education programs lead to moral development. Actually they have been able to account for very little of the variance in the success or failure of such programs.

For the past ten years, along with my collaborator John Gibbs, I have been investigating the nature of moral discussion as it relates to the effectiveness of moral discussion-based interventions. We have discovered that the form that discussion takes is a significant predictor of whether the discussants will successfully develop higher levels of moral understanding. We have borrowed John Dewey's (Dewey & Bentley, 1949) term "transactive" to describe this type of discussion, defined as actively thinking about the reasoning of one's co-discussants and representing that in one's discourse behavior. Hence when one student expands upon, critiques or integrates the reasoning of a co-discussant s/he is engaging in behavior that should increase the likelihood of developing more adequate forms of reasoning, theoretically by maximizing the opportunity for Piagetian disequilibrium. On the other hand, students that engage in such non-transactive discourse behaviors as simple "parroting", non-sequitors, or alternating monologues would be unlikely to benefit developmentally from the discussion. We have identified 18 types of transactive discussion and have successfully related them to developmental gains in a peer dialgoue intervention with undergraduates. Furthermore, transactive discussion seems to account for more moral development than moral stage

or other more traditional variables. Bill Damon (Damon & Killen, 1982) has partially replicated this research with young children and is currently attempting to refine his categorization of elementary school developmental discourse. While John Gibbs and I, as already noted, have found that our transactive discussion behaviors are largely built upon the development of logical thinking in adolescence, Damon and others (e.g., Powers, 1982) have managed to successfully adapt some of those behaviors in studying younger subjects. Furthermore, in Europe Fritz Oser (in press) has been taking a similar appraoch to the study of earlier adolescent moral discourse. We therefore feel that we have uncovered a significant developmental process, but one that needs to and can be adapted and expanded for other age groups.

Not only is our work not limited to one age group but as I had mentioned a moment ago, I do not feel that this work is specific to the study of discussions of only moral content either. Indeed work paralleling ours has been done in more traditionally cognitive reasoning domains. Let me briefly list some of these studies.

While much research has been done in the past decade or so in an attempt to demonstrate the developmentally facilitative effects of peer conflictual discussions of logical Piagetian problems (e.g., Silverman & Geiringer, 1973), only a few of these studies have directly investigated the underlying discourse process. Miller and Brownell (1975) examined some of the interactive behaviors in peer conserver/

non-conserver conflict resolution dialogues. Ellice Forman (Forman, Parrish & Hom, 1980) has analyzed early adolescent attempts to jointly solve Piagetian formal operational tasks. More recently, Max Miller and Bill Damon have independently begun programs of research with young children that should shed more light on the social conflict process underlying logical development.

I realize that this cursory overview of ongoing research into the social interactive processes of moral (and other) reasoning development must be somewhat vague and therefore frustrating to those of you not previously familiar with this work. However, given the time constraints in this presentation format and the fact that most of the information alluded to thus far is available in print elsewhere, I have opted to minimize the details in my presentation of the existing literature in order to allow time to more directly address the integrative theme of this symposium, namely "Moral and social education for 1984 and beyond". By now it should be obvious that I would argue that developmental process should not and will not be ignored in considerations of moral and social education in the future. While I have focused upon the research side of this issue, I am not insensitive to its applied side. It has become all too clear to me that there is a fundamental and inappropriate assumption in the moral education literature concerning verbal competency (an assumption that is probably present in other educational domains as well). While we generally recognize that individual

language skills, such as the "3 R's", need educational nurturance, it is nevertheless assumed that students come to class with the social verbal skills necessary to optimally interact verbally with their peers. Particularly in the practice of moral education, interest and effort in monitoring and training such interactive skills is non-existent. It has always seemed somewhat unreasonable to me to assume that such training is unnecessary. In our research, we have found that only 20-25% of undergraduate moral discourse represents what we call developmental or transactive discourse behavior, and that only about 15% of such discourse takes the form of the most developmentally productive type of transactive discussion. I would assume, although we have not yet collected data to document this, that training would increase those numbers. We are presently testing this assumption. If we are right, it seems fair to also assume that this increase would consequently increase the developmental benefits of moral education programs. Therefore I would propose that moral and social education in 1984 and beyond look to monitoring and training social interaction skills in order to maximize the developmental benefits of such programs. In order to do that, we need more data about the nature of developmentally-facilitative discussion processes. And, built upon these data and in collaboration with educational practitioners, we need to develop curricula for training developmental discourse in students (cf. Berkowitz, 1982, for such a proposal).

I have essentially highlighted a single theme in moral education thus far in this presentation; a theme that represents current and future directions in the field. I would like to take advantage of having the floor at the moment to briefly suggest four other "future directions" that I consider to be very important for the future of moral education. The first three can also be considered "process" issues in moral education. All four are currently beginning to be explored by numerous researchers.

First, theoretical and empirical knowledge of the relationship between moral reasoning and moral behavior must be integrated into moral educational practice. While a substantial literature on laboratory and field studies of such "judgment/action" phenomena has been developed (cf. Blasi, 1980), the education literature is still only beginning to seriously consider this relationship (e.g., Oser & Schläfli, in press; Power & Reimer, 1978), despite the centrally practical issues involved in school behavior and student development.

Second, the role of affect in moral functioning is beginning to be addressed, despite the traditional Piagetian de-emphasis of emotional and personality phenomena (Villenave-Cremer & Eckensberger, in press). As a sidelight on these issues, abnormal personality issues are also beginning to be addressed in a new movement becoming known as "clinical-developmental psychology" (Hewer, in press; Kegan, 1982; Noam, in press).

A third future direction for moral education has already been touched upon by Clark Power today. His study of large school governance processes is an example of a diverse set of studies concerned with out of classroom, and even out of school, moral education; that is, moral education defined more broadly than classroom-based phenomena. Other examples of this concern the workplace (e.g., Higgins & Gordon, in press), professional education (e.g., Oser & Schläfli, in press) and the family (Lickona, 1983; Powers, 1982). It is abundantly clear from the early Head Start efforts as well as from other similar programs that the life of a student is best touched in many areas rather than merely the classroom if meaningful change is to be effected.

Finally, a fourth new direction concerns the integration of value-based moral education with structural "value free" approaches, such as has been described by Kohlberg and his colleagues. One side of this issue (although certainly not the only side) relates to religious approaches to moral education. In the attempt to faithfully adhere to the theoretical model of universal structural development, Kohlberg and others have exorcised values from their implementations of moral education. They have had justifiable reasons for doing so, which I will not elaborate here. It has become clear to me in the past five years, however, that we can no longer ignore value-based approaches to moral education. I have been faced too often by the religious educator who sincerely is attracted to adopting part or all of the Kohlberg approach but who is

frustrated and confused by the implication that s/he must abandon values in the religious curriculum is s/he is to do effective and valid moral education. Unfortunately, I have no ready answers to this problem. Our next two speakers, Larry Nucci and Judy Smetana, will speak to a related issue, the relationship of social conventions to morality, and perhaps will therefore indirectly shed some light on this issue. I therefore will now relinquish the podium to them.

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